IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-18 (Canceled)

Claim 19 (Original) A satellite communications system comprising a plurality of user terminals and at least one earth station, each of said user terminals being arranged to communicate with said at least one earth station via at least one satellite, wherein the system is arranged so that said user terminals and/or said earth station are able to receive data at any one of a set of input data rates and to transmit said user data at a corresponding one of a set of output data rates, wherein the ratio between one of said input data rates and the corresponding one of said output data rates differs from one of said input data rates to another one of said input data rates, such that the ratio between each of said input data rates and the lowest common multiple of said set of input data rates is less than the ratio between each of said output data rates and the lowest common multiple of said set of output data rates.

Claim 20 (Original) A system as claimed in claim 19, wherein said set of output data rates comprises 8, 16 and 33.6 ksymbol/s.

Claim 21 (Currently amended) A system as claimed in claim 19 ~~or 20~~, wherein said set of input data rates comprises 14.4, 28.8 and 64 kbit/s.

Claim 22 (Original) A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said set of input data rates further includes 56 kbit/s.

Claims 23-31 (Canceled)

Claim 32 (New) Apparatus arranged to carry out the method of claim 19.